

Second Health Agency Town Hall Talks Integration



The second Health Agency Town Hall meeting took place on August 31, 2016 at 313 N. Figueroa in the DPH/DHS Auditorium, to discuss the integration of the Los Angeles County Departments of Public Health (DPH), Health Services (DHS) and Mental Health (DMH). All three departments exist under an umbrella agency entitled the "Health Agency." It is hoped that having the Health Agency over the three departments will help to streamline services in a more cost-effective manner, with each department retaining separate directors and budgets.



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Staff from the three departments got an opportunity to ask questions in advance via e-mail and live at the actual Town Hall about what is happening under the Health Agency, with leaders from all three agencies present, as well as County union representatives.

Mitch Katz, M.D., Health Agency Director, answered questions about the timeline of hiring permanent directors for DMH and DPH. Interviews for the DMH Director position have been completed and a director should be announced by mid-September. Following the appointment of a DMH Director, the same hiring process will be followed to find a director for DPH. Dr. Katz said that the LA County Board of Supervisors will make the final decision on who will be selected for both directorships. Dr. Katz also said that no services will be closed or integrated right now.



Robin Kay, Ph.D., DMH Acting Director talked about extensive trainings that DMH has been sponsoring, such as Mental Health First Aid. Other panelists included: Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH, Interim Health Officer for DPH, who spoke on agency collaborations in the community, specifically with the Exide Battery clean up.

Alina Mendizabal from SEIU 721 introduced and moderated the panel. Additional Union representatives that served as panelists included: Stuart Bussey, MD, JD, UAPD President; Bob Schoonover, SEIU 721 President; and Gavin Koon, IUOE Business Representative. Idys Ramos, DMH PSW at Twin Towers, spoke on Agency collaboration with services in the jail.



The creation of a Health Agency logo has been initiated, with three good examples by Frank Duarte, DMH Medical Case Worker, shown at the Town Hall. Logos were unveiled by Alex Li, MD, Public Health Deputy

Director, Systems Integration.

Thanks to all staff that made this happen, especially John Flynn, who coordinated the WebEx broadcast to over 145 DMH users during the event.



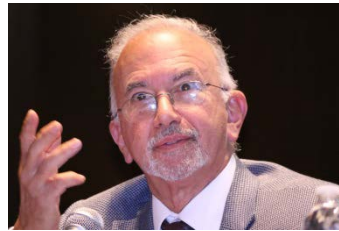


MC Harris on the microphone during Q & A with panelists.

Other panelists:



Bob
Schoonover,
SEIU President



Stuart Bussey,
MD, JD



Jeffrey
Gunzenhauser,
MD, MPH



Aldys Ramos,
PSW



Gavin Koon